(c) The Government have taken the following steps for development of shipping sector:—

(i) Introduction of automatic approval for acquisition of ships.

(ii) Committee for Slotting of ship repair, which used to decide about the yards where ships were required to be repaired, has been abolished. It has been left to the shipowners to decide the yard for repairs based on his commercial judgement.

(iii) Shipping companies have been permitted to retain sale proceeds of Indian ships abroad for utilization for fresh acquisition.

(iv) Freedom to time charter out Indian ships to foreign companies for employment in international cross trade.

(v) Allowing shipping companies to acquire vessels on charter-cum-demise method (similar to hire purchase system).

(vi) Age norms for acquisition of second hand vessels have been further relaxed.

(vii) Import of large vessels have been placed under open general licence w.e.f. 1.4.1997.

Fourlaning of Highways in Arunachal Pradesh

3336. SHRI DRUPAD BORGOHAIN: Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have sanctioned money to improve the National Highways that connects towns located in the North of the Brahmaputra upto Arunachal Pradesh *via* North Lakhimpur, Dhemaji, Jonai; and

(b) whether Government will sanction money to build the highway as fourlane highway upto Arunachal Pradesh *via* Dhemaji and Jonai?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (DR. DEBENDRA PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) No, Sir.